



Mindfulness For Good Health and Wellness

While the concept of making time to relax and slow-down is not new, the speed of life these days has meant carving out time for self-care has become more important.

It is the battle cry of modern times, being busy and stressed; and with the end of the school year, and Christmas on the horizon, the stress levels tend to rise and self-care gets pushed down the priority list.

Mindfulness refers to a state of consciousness where interaction with others and your own thoughts and the environment is undertaken with deep thought, and without judgement. It is a mental state achieved by focusing your own awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

This is often approached as a holistic health framework, where the whole person and how they interact with their environment is considered. Holistic health emphasises the connection of mind, body, and spirit.

Just as we are seeing more information around the benefits of physical exercise on our mind, we are also seeing the effects of mindfulness on our bodies by reducing feelings of anxiety and stress.

For many, mindfulness is about being still and quiet, and certainly this is a valuable way of approaching it. However, mindfulness is also something that can be added to a range of everyday tasks to improve health.

Mindful activities and practices such as Pilates, tai chi and yoga have proven popular and are based on long histories of tradition and effectiveness. However many find that activities that involve getting the heart rate up, but allow the mind to be free, can offer the benefits of mindfulness, as anyone who has gone for a walk-in nature can attest to. Those who do enjoy a higher intensity level of physical activity are also finding the addition of a more focused mindfulness experience in conjunction with their more intense activity a valuable addition to their physical activity enjoyment.

The complementary partners to physical activity are sleep and eating. Adding a mindfulness practice to these elements will also result in positive outcomes. Mindful eating is about quality over quantity. This includes ensuring that the food eaten has nutritional value, and the act of eating is undertaken with care and attention. In the short term a lack of sleep leads to loss of concentration, tiredness, fatigue and impaired physical and mental performance. In the long term lack of sleep can contribute to negative health outcomes.

For those who are struggling to add regular physical activity into their lives, adding in a mindfulness practice can help, as mindfulness enables us to recognise and overcome the many ways that we tend to get caught in procrastination and resistance in our lives. The investment into mindfulness doesn't need to be large to create potentially large benefits to both physical and emotional wellness and health.

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

NZ Register of Exercise Professionals, Registrar Stephen Gacsal

Email: stephen@reps.org.nz telephone: 0800 55 44 99 website: www.reps.org.nz

NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the “warrant of fitness check” that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

Exercise Association of New Zealand, Chief Executive Richard Beddie

Email: richard@exercisenz.org.nz, telephone: 0800 66 88 11 website: <http://www.exercisenz.org.nz>

Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

